

Group Memory

Hopland Bypass. CAC Meeting –June 22, 2004

Meeting notes prepared by: Alan Escarda, Project Manager

In Attendance:

<u>CAC Member</u>	<u>PHONE NUMBER</u>
Brian Manning	707-744-1611
Ava Kong	707-744-1171
Mike Milovina	707-744-8828
Richard Henwood	707-744-1909
Ted Starr	707-744-1396
Colin Brooks	707-744-1936
Dick Sherwin	707-744-8417
Tom Ashurst	707-744-1251
Tiffany Gibson	707-744-1196

Public in attendance:

Deanna Starr	707-744-1396
Jerry Yates	707-744-1009

CalTrans:

Praj White	707-445-6604
Alan Escarda	707-441-2097
Steven Hughes	707-445-6418
Robin Collins	707-445-6606

MCOG

Phil Dow	707-463-1806
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Group Decisions

All decisions made will be double underlined in the body of the notes below.

Caltrans Website address:

www.dot.ca.gov

The new Hopland Bypass Website address is:

<http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist1/d1projects/hopland/index.htm>

Next meeting date

November 9, 2004 at Hopland Field Station. 6:00 - 8:00 PM

Desired outcome for June 22, 2004 meeting:

- 1) Review upcoming project milestones and budget issues.**
- 2) Review and comment on North Hopland Alternatives NHF1, NHF2 and NHE.**
- 4) Review Quantum optimization of alternatives**
- 3) Plan next CAC meeting**

1. Introductions, purpose of meeting, check in:
2. Purpose of meeting is to review Alternatives NHF1, HHF2, and NHE and to present project update on funding.
3. Public Comment:
4. Alan reviewed last memory meeting notes and reviewed action items. Alan asked the CAC if they were willing to add Jerry Yates to the CAC. There was no opposition from CAC members and Jerry accepted the responsibility. Jerry will be added to all future CAC correspondence.

Upshot

These are the assignments made at the meeting. As new ones are added they will be appended to the list. As assignments are completed they will be lined out with ~~a strike through~~, but left on the list. This will provide a running record of assignments made at these meetings.

Action Items From 2-3-2003 meeting

1	Alan	Send memory notes and next meeting agenda out to the CAC.	March 2004
2	Praj	Attached bar charts to the impact matrix.	By next meeting
3	Richard Henwood	Email comments to Praj on VE2 and E alignments	By next meeting
4	Alan	Update website	ongoing

Alan briefed the members regarding the funding and programming issues in regards to the Hopland Bypass Project. He explained how the project was slated for deprogramming by CT HQ unless the local regional transportation planning agency (RTPA) Mendocino Council of Governments (MCOG) was willing to commit a large percentage of their future transportation funding to the bypass project. During the last 6 months HQ had reduced staff funding by over 90 % and the project had been virtually stopped. District 1 Director and District management lobbied HQ to keep project alive.

Fortunately MCOG passed a resolution to commit future funding from their STIP shares for the Hopland Bypass project on April 5, 2004. A handout of the resolution was given to the CAC. The Bypass project is funded for up to \$7.2m to finish the Project Report with the goal of selecting a preferred alternative called LEDPA (least environmentally damaging practicable alternative). Over 15 staff will be assigned to the project starting with the new fiscal year in July.

Environmental specialists are now scheduled to do biological and other environmental field studies over the entire valley for the next 6-12 months. Biological studies are about 75% complete. Design would gear back up and continue design modifications of the existing alternatives and a public open house would be planned after the winter holidays. Alan also explained that CT HQ wanted to know what the least expensive alternative that meet the purpose and need of the Hopland Bypass would cost as they wanted to see if the project was even feasible from a funding perspective. The low cost VE3 alternative with one interchanged was provided for programming purposes only. This does not mean that this is the preferred alternative- only that there are alternatives that are feasible to fund in the future when one takes into account the funding commitment from MCOG. The final result was that the District was allowed to go forward with the Hopland Bypass Project!

Phil Dow from MCOG then addressed the CAC explaining his role as executive director of MCOG and MCOG's role in local transportation. He explained MCOG was composed of representatives from the incorporated cities and County and they meet about once a month. Phil gave the group a historic perspective of local transportation funding, current transportation priorities, MCOG's funding relationship with Caltrans (75% local- 25% state) and how much funding they typically receive. (Zero in some years but the average is around 8 or 10m).

Phil stated that the Willits bypass was their #1 priority and they had in the past committed nearly all of their funding for this single project. They were rewarded by the state with nearly 90% in matching funds. When the economy was going good around year 2000 Caltrans was able to get Hopland Bypass and the North Hopland projects programmed for Project Report phases. MCOG had these projects listed as the number 2 and 3 highest priority projects after the Willits Bypass project. MCOG had spent their funding in the last few years on city and county transportation projects instead of state highway projects. Now that the economy has been depressed and transportation funding has been cut, Caltrans approach them and asked them to commit future funding to keep the Hopland Bypass project moving forward. Phil successfully convinced the MCOG board to pass a resolution to dedicate \$5m per 2-year STIP cycle for future phases of the Hopland Bypass project. Hopland Bypass project hadn't received funding from MCOG in the past, but funding was now needed to show Caltrans that the Hopland Bypass project is important to locals. Phil said that the priority is to get to the project report completed then buy R/W for the entire preferred alignment, finish the final design and begin construction of phase one bypass no later than 2011.

Group discussion:

Richard asked if any alignments would be eliminated

Alan – Western alignment was previously dropped and Staff will recommend to the PDT to drop VW3 from further study as a result of the CAC input.

E1 will probably be carried through even though it has high environmental impacts and is an unlikely candidate for being constructed.

Phil Dow stated that MCOG wants in-depth origin and destination study in which drivers are stopped and interviewed.

Praj discussed modified VE3 alt and said it was not necessarily the preferred alt because it was the lowest cost, but a modified low cost VE3 alignment would be presented at the next PDT meeting. The CAC that they were concerned that the interchange at rt. 175 would be subjected to flooding and the town would be isolated during storm events. Need to look at emergency access during flooding events.

Praj also spoke briefly on the purpose and need for the project. That HQ would need to be shown that the project would have a positive benefit /cost ratio. Using safety as the number one factor and congestion relief as the second highest priority the Hopland Bypass had a positive B/C ratio. Including North Hopland effectively reduced the B/C to less than one but Praj was not convinced the B/C program used by Caltrans was being used

appropriately and we would have to do more work to justify the North Hopland segment. (Decrease projects cost or justify higher benefits from project).

5. Praj White handed out an environmental impact matrix and explained that he had generated impact estimates from the aerial mapping. Impacts such as acreage of riparian habitat, wetlands, oak woodlands, floodway/floodplain were estimated for each alignment. He stressed that these estimates were rough and would be refined when our environmental specialists complete actual ground surveyed over the next 12 months. Praj then reviewed alignments NHF1, NHF2 and NHE.

6. Group discussion regarding NHF1:

Maximum frontage road with freeway. CAC consensus was they wanted freeway with frontage road but minimize frontage road impacts.

7. Group discussion regarding NHF2:

Minimum frontage road alt with Freeway.

8. Group discussion regarding NHE:

Alan stated that he did not think that an expressway system would meet the purpose and need of the project (would not improve safety enough) and would probably be recommended by staff to the PDT to be eliminated. CAC consensus ...they agreed that the expressway should be dropped.

CAC recommends reduce Ag land take by using tighter ramps at interchanges.

CAC also recommended looking at providing southbound access from Hopland to rt. 101 at the south end and northbound access to Hopland from rt. 101 if full interchanges are too expensive.

9. Quantm presentation by Praj.

Quantm is an optimization program used to identify the preferred corridor. Model limitations include no way to include interchanges. Software is not a design tool, but an initial planning tool where project constraints are identified, and quantified. The software will then run millions of optimization scenarios by either avoiding designated land or avoiding land that is given expensive values. The top 50 lowest cost alternatives are then provided.

Results showed we were within 10% of the cost estimates of previous alternatives. Lowest cost corridor ran up the valley and balanced structure cost with fill in the floodway. Richard Henwood asked why Fetzer was being singled out as an avoid zone?

Although part of Fetzer is included in an avoid zone, the avoid zone does not follow Fetzer's parcel line exactly. Praj stated that he was told by the CAC and community that the Valley Oaks property was consider a valuable community asset and the Fetzer bottling facilities were high cost in their own right.

Alan stated we should make additional runs allowing Fetzer to land to be considered so we can show the cost of avoidance.

Richard agreed that the historic buildings on Fetzer property should be avoided.

Praj said that we only had access to the Quantm program for another month and he take the remaining time to refine the optimization runs with more current information/ mapping from the environmental crew that is currently doing field studies. He would also conduct optimization runs of each alternative currently under study. We would bring back the results of Quantm optimization runs to the next CAC meeting.

Critique from June 22, 2004 meeting: (not done at this meeting)

What went well	What Needs Improvement
1.	1.
2.	2.

Assignments from June 22, 2004

1	Alan	Get meeting notes out to CAC.	July 2004
2	Praj	Finish Quantm runs	August 2004
3	Alan	Send out agenda for next meeting one month prior to next meeting date of November 9, 2004.	October 9, 2004

Desired outcome for next meeting on November 9, 2004:

Presentation of preliminary environmental studies by Environmental.

Design presentation of final Quantm results and **proposed alignment modifications.**

Get input from CAC and forward to PDT meeting.

PM to give update on project schedule and confirm open house target date (January/February 2005).

Plan next CAC meeting.

Bin List & Great Ideas

1. What about things we should avoid? Not just what we want, but what we specifically don't want? (Dick S, Feb 5, 2003)
2. On-going status of the project. Finances. (Todd; Feb 5, 2003)

Definition: The Community Advisory Committee provides a regular forum for community members, organizational representatives, and the Department to communicate with each other regarding the projects on an ongoing basis.

Role: The CAC will serve as the primary voice of the community on topics pertaining to the development phase of the Hopland Bypass project. The CAC is intended to help identify problems and articulate and clarify key issues of interest to the local community.

The advisory committee is not a decision-making body.

The CAC is intended to communicate local viewpoints to the Project Development Team – the project's technical committee. The Project Development Team makes final project recommendations to Department Management.

It is important to note that, for a variety of compelling reasons, Caltrans cannot always implement input provided by the CAC. When this occurs, the Department will provide a clear reason.

1. Ground Rules
 1. 1. Start and end on time.
 1. 2. One conversation at a time.
 1. 3. Cell phones set to stun.
 1. 4. Be courteous.
 1. 5. No smoking.
2. Decision making process:
 2. 1. Consensus if possible.
 2. 2. This is not a technical decision making group.